

November 2020 Report

Violations in interventions, detentions, investigations and lawsuits against freedom of expression as well as the right to meeting and demonstration continued in November 2020. Physical violation was used in security interventions, with reverse handcuffs. Investigations and lawsuits due to social media posts continued in November. House raids were organised and detentions continued against journalists, politicians and rights advocates. There were prosecutions, investigations, arrests, threats and attacks. Imprisonment sentences were issued as a result of some prosecutions.

1. ADMINISTRATIVE BANS AND SECURITY INTERVENTIONS

02: Hakkari The Governorate banned all meetings and demonstrations for 15 days.

02: Istanbul The police intervened against the press statement organised by BIMEKS workers in front of Boğaziçi University, where company owner Vedat Akgiray was lecturing, in order to receive their missing salaries and compensation. Seven people were detained. The seven people were released on the same day and organised another press statement, then were detained for the second time.

04: Ankara The police prevented the press statement organized by the Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DISK) in front of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) in order to protest the omnibus bill debated at the GNAT.

04: Ankara The police detained eight people in the march organised by the Labourist Movement Party (EHP) in front of the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) in order to protest the omnibus bill debated at the GNAT.

04: Osmaniye People's Democratic Party (HDP) Osmaniye Provincial Co-Chairs and Provincial Chairmen were detained in house raids. Provincial Co-Chairs were arrested on November 9.

05: Ağrı The police intervened against the press statement organized on November 5, 2020 for the anniversary of the detention of People's Democratic Party (HDP) Doğubeyazıt MPs in 2016. People's Democratic Party (HDP) members and executives, including MP Dilan Dirayet Taşdemir, were exposed to physical violence of the police.

05: Van The Governorate banned all protests and demonstrations for 15 days.

06: Ankara The police intervened against the press statement organized to protest the anniversary of the establishment of the Higher Education Council (YÖK) and detained 32 people using physical violence.

06: Dersim The police prevented the press statement organised by Dersim Women's Platform members in order to protest the sexual harassment experienced by a woman at her workplace.

- 06: Siirt** The Governorate banned all meetings and demonstrations for 15 days.
- 07: Ankara** The police prevented the press statement organised by the Confederation of Public Employees' Unions (KESK) at Sakarya Street for the 4th anniversary of the dismissals of public workers within the State of Emergency applications.
- 08: Adana** 3 people were detained due to their social media posts.
- 09: Istanbul** 18 trans women were detained in Beyoğlu due to Coronavirus.
- 10: Ankara** The police prevented the press statement organised in front of the Human Rights Monument on Yüksel Street at 18:00 within the "re-employment" protests that are ongoing for 1463 days.
- 10: Istanbul** The police intervened against the press statement organised by BIMEKS workers in front of Boğaziçi University, where company owner Vedat Akgiray was lecturing, in order to receive their missing salaries and compensation. Four people were detained.
- 11: Ankara** Eight people, including People's Democratic Party (HDP) members and executives, were detained due to "making illegal organisation propaganda through social media posts" during house raids.
- 11: Antalya** A citizen, I.D., was arrested due to his/her expressions on a street interview.
- 11: Hatay** Dörtüyl Criminal Judicature of Peace issued an access ban against the posts on social media accounts @ankara_kusu, @KubilayKaptan and @Who98408150 due to "violation of personal rights."
- 13: Mardin** The Governorate bound all protests and demonstrations within the Law No. 2911 to permission from the local administration for 30 days.
- 14: Diyarbakır** The convoy organized by Dicle Amed Women's Platform members, who gathered at Dünya Intersection in Kayapınar District for the "Purple Convoy" within the November 25 events, was prevented by the police due to the "COVID-19 outbreak."
- 14: Urfa** The Governorate banned the staging of Kurdish theater play "Bêrû" (Shameless), which was organised to be staged at the Bar Association's conference hall, indefinitely across Urfa.
- 15: Van** The police prevented members of the Solidarity With Refugees Network from leaving carnations at the Van Lake in order to draw attention to refugee deaths, based on the Governorate ban.
- 16: Ankara** Kurdish Writers Association Chairman and writer Nezir Çakan was arrested after being detained in Diyarbakır on November 12, 2020 within an Ankara-based investigation on Kobanê incidents in 2014 and was brought to Ankara afterwards.
- 17: Hakkari** The Governorate banned all protests and demonstrations for 15 days.

18: Istanbul Six people, including People's Democratic Party (HDP) and TUAY-DER executives, were detained with house raids.

19: Istanbul The police intervened against the press statement organised by BIMEKS workers in front of Boğaziçi University, where company owner Vedat Akgiray was lecturing, in order to receive their missing salaries and compensation. Five people were detained. The five people were released after testifying and organised another press statement, then were detained for the second time. This time, thirteen people were detained.

20: Batman The Governorate bound all events to permission by the local administration. On the other hand, the Governorate banned all events to be organised around Closed Prison Type-M for 15 days.

20: Van The Governorate banned all protests and demonstrations for 15 days. With this decree, the protest and demonstration ban in Van that has been applied since November 21, 2016 was extended to a continuous 1474 days.

21: Istanbul The police intervened against the press statement organised by the People's Democratic Party (HDP) in order to protest the detainment of lawyers, rights advocates and politicians in Diyarbakır, detaining 22 people.

22: Kocaeli The Governorate banned all demonstrations and open air meetings for 30 days.

22: Mardin The Governorate issued a curfew in certain rural neighborhoods in Midyat and Dargeçit until second notice.

23: Mardin The Governorate banned all protests and demonstrations to be organised within the province for 30 days.

23: Van The balloon flying activities organised by TJA activists within the November 25 events were prevented by the police.

24: Gebze The group gathering in front of United Metal-Labour Union Gebze Branch building No. 1 in order to march to Ankara to protest dismissals from work without compensation as well as unpaid leaves were intervened by the police. 109 people were detained with physical violence.

24: Istanbul The police detained 10 women, using physical violence and reverse handcuffs, at the march organised by women in Taksim for November 25, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women.

25: Karaman The police intervened against mine workers, who wanted to march from Ermenek to Ankara for their unpaid salaries and compensation. Attacking the workers with pressurised water and tear gas, the police detained 30 people, including Independent Mine-Labour Union Chairman Tahir Çetin.

28: Dersim The Governorate banned all protests and demonstrations for 15 days.

2. Investigations, Arrests and Prosecutions

02: Diyarbakır 9th Assize Court sentenced Rosa Women's Association member Rojda Barış to 6 years and three months of imprisonment due to "illegal organisation membership."

02: Istanbul The verdict of acquittal issued by the 13th Assize Court for Reporters Without Borders (RSF) Turkey Representative Erol Önderoğlu, Ahmet Nesin, Prof Dr Şebnem Korur Fincancı in the lawsuit filed due to their participation in the "Substitute Editing-In-Chief Campaign" to support previously shut-down Özgür Gündem Daily, was reversed by the 3rd Criminal Chamber of the Regional Court.

03: Ankara The prosecution of 14 people, who were detained in the police intervention against the commemoration on the anniversary of the Soma Massacre, started at the 33rd Criminal Court of First Instance. The next hearing was scheduled for February 4, 2021.

03: Ankara Peace and Democracy Party (BDP) former Urfa MP İbrahim Binici, People's Democratic Party (HDP) Party Assembly member Mesut Bağcık and Ayşe Yağcı were arrested after having been detained on October 27 within the investigation on the Kobanê protests in 2014.

03: Istanbul The prosecution of 15 prisoner relatives have started at Bakırköy 13th Criminal Court of First Instance due to making an announcement in front of Bakırköy Prison for the isolation of the PKK leader to be revoked.

04: Edirne An investigation was opened against 2 soldiers after the complaint of Ç.D., who performs his compulsory military service at Edirne 54th Mechanised Infantry Brigadier Command, after he was exposed to a racist attack due to defending education in Kurdish. However, after the testimonies of the two soldiers, an investigation was started against complainant Ç.D. due to "making illegal organisation propaganda" and "disobedience to order."

04: Kocaeli The prosecution of 27 people, six of whom are arrested including People's Democratic Party (HDP) Co-Chairs, continued at the 2nd Assize Court. The court decided for the six people to remain arrested and scheduled the next hearing for December 2.

04: Mardin 4th Assize Court sentenced People's Democratic Party (HDP) politicians Ali Sincar to 7 years and one month, Leyla Bozkurt to 6 years, 10 months and 15 days, Şehmuz Sun to 6 years and 8 months, Alaattin Semir Zuğurlu to 7 years, 6 months and Sedat Ay to 6 years, 10 months and 15 days of imprisonment.

04: Şırnak The first hearing of the lawsuit filed against 16 people, who participated in the commemoration event for Roboski Massacre in 2015, at the 2nd Assize Court due to "making illegal organisation propaganda." After receiving the defense statements, the court scheduled the next hearing for December 23.

05: Istanbul The lawsuit filed against 9 people, including Etkin News Agency reporters and ESP, KESK and SGDF members, continued at the 32nd Assize Court due to

“illegal organisation membership.” The next hearing was scheduled for March 16, 2021 after the defense statements.

05: Istanbul Ileri Haber’s former Editor-In-Chief Onur Emre Yağan was sentenced to 1 year, 2 months and 17 days of imprisonment in the lawsuit filed against him at the Anatolian 53rd Criminal Court of First Instance due to “insulting the President” through four social media posts made in 2014 from the news website’s social media accounts.

05: Istanbul The lawsuit filed against journalist Rüstem Batun continued at the 5th Criminal Court of First Instance due to “insulting the President” through his social media posts.

06: Ankara Lawyer Kenan Maçoğlu was acquitted of the charge of “insulting the President” at the 8th Assize Court in the lawsuit filed against him due to the criminal complaint made against President Tayyip Erdoğan and former ministers after Reza Zarrab’s statements at the United States.

06: Diyarbakır 8th Assize Court sentenced former Mayor Mustafa Uyguner to 7 years and six months of imprisonment due to “illegal organisation membership.” District Co-Chair Sevim Adsoy was acquitted.

06: Diyarbakır 26 Education and Science Workers’ Union (Eğitim-Sen) member teachers were detained within the investigation against the Democratic Society Congress (DTK); one teacher was arrested.

06: Diyarbakır The indictment prepared against former MP Emine Ayna due to “illegal organisation membership” and “unarmed participation in illegal meetings and demonstrations as well as not dispersing despite warning” was accepted by the 4th Assize Court.

09: Ankara Journalist Yılmaz Özdil was sentenced to 5 months of imprisonment at the 3rd Criminal Court of First Instance due to “public denigration or an equivalent activity corresponding to public denigration” through his statements on Defense Minister Hulusi Akar at a TV show he attended. The announcement of the verdict was deferred.

09: Ankara In the first hearing of the lawsuit filed against OdaTV Ankara News Director Müyesser Yıldız, Erdal Baran, TELE1 Ankara Representative İsmail Dükkel at the 26th Assize Court, the court decided for Erdal Baran to remain under arrest, for the release of Müyesser Yıldız and denied the request for the travel ban against İsmail Dükkel to be revoked. The next hearing was scheduled for January 6, 2021.

09: Istanbul The police intervened against the press statement organised by Furkan Foundation members at Saraçhane Park on the acquittal decree issued in the lawsuit filed against the Foundation’s founder Chairman Alpaslan Kuytul. 40 people were detained with physical violence.

09: Istanbul Socialist Women’s Assemblies spokesperson Deniz Aktaş was detained at Sabiha Gökçen Airport due to an investigation opened against her participation in a protest against the trustee appointment to Van Metropolitan Municipality.

10: Adana The prosecution of lawyer Şiar Rıřvanođlu started at the 9th Assize Court in the lawsuit filed against him due to using the expressions, “Kurdistan” and “guerrilla” in his speech at the General Council of Adana Bar Association on October 15, 2018. The indictment claims for the lawyer to be penalised in accordance with Article 301 of the Turkish Criminal Code. The next hearing was scheduled for January 28, 2021.

10: Istanbul The prosecutions of journalists Canan Cořkun, Can Uđur and Ali Aęar continued at the 34th Assize Court in the lawsuit filed against them due to the news they reported on Berkin Elvan, who was killed during the Gezi Park protests.

10: Istanbul TELE1 Foreign News Editor journalist-writer ađlar Tekin was detained at ađlayan Courthouse, where he came to watch a hearing, due to sharing a news article.

10: Mardin 4th Assize Court sentenced řerafettin Aslan and previously shut-down MEYADER district Co-Chair Abidin Esen to 2 years and one month of imprisonment each due to “aiding an illegal organisation” through a banner opened at a funeral ceremony.

11: Antalya A citizen named I.D. was detained due to his/her statements during a street interview and was arrested the next day.

11: Diyarbakır 9th Assize Court sentenced Rosa Women’s Association founder member Narin Gezgör to 7 years and six months of imprisonment due to “illegal organisation membership.”

11: Istanbul The prosecution of 23 people, including an ETHA reporter and ESP, SGDF members, continued at the 25th Assize Court within the lawsuit filed against them.

11: Istanbul The prosecution of 5 people, who were arrested due to attending the funeral ceremony of Grup Yorum member İbrahim Gökçek after he died as a result of his indefinite hunger strike, continued at the 32nd Assize Court. The court released five people after their defense statements.

12: Ankara The prosecution of former People’s Democratic Party (HDP) Co-Chair Figen Yüksekdađ continued at the 10th Assize Court with the allegation of “insulting the President” in her written statement on the arrest of journalists Can Dündar and Erdem Gül. The court scheduled the next hearing for February 11, 2021.

12: Istanbul The prosecution of 22 people, who were detained in the press statement organised in Kadıköy on the fourth anniversary of the Suruç Massacre on July 20, 2019, started at the Anatolian 27th Criminal Court of First Instance.

13: Antalya A former Prosecutor, who was on trial due to insulting religious values on social media, was sentenced to 1 year, 6 months and 22 days of imprisonment. The prosecutor was acquitted of the charge of insulting the President, whereas was sentenced to 35,580 TL judicial fine due to insulting Foreign Minister Mevlüt avuřođlu, Interior Minister Süleyman Soyulu, AKP Deputy Chairman Hamza Dađ and Antalya National Real Estate Chamber Chairman Ođuzhan Sürmeli.

13: Mardin 4th Assize Court issued consecutive decrees of penalty. The court sentenced Hüseyin Aydın and Mürsel İnan to heavy life imprisonment due to “disrupting the unity and the territorial integrity of the state.” The court further sentenced Derik Co-Mayor Abdülkerim Erdem to 7 years and 11 months of imprisonment, as well as the other Co-Mayor Sabahat Çetinkaya, Mazlum erek and Abdullah Ecer to 6 years and three months of imprisonment each; Cihan akar to 7 years and six months of imprisonment and Murat Özüçalışır to 7 years, 8 months and 15 days of imprisonment. The court also sentenced Tacettin Aslan and Halit Efe to 2 years and one month of imprisonment each due to “willfully aiding an illegal organisation without membership.”

16: Şırnak Şırnak 2nd Assize Court sentenced Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TIHV) Cizre Representative and Şırnak Medical Chamber Chairman Dr Serdar Küni to 4 years and two months of imprisonment.

17: İstanbul Journalist and Confederation of Progressive Trade Unions of Turkey (DISK) Press-Labour Spokesman Ali Ergin Demirhan was sentenced to 1 year, 2 months and 17 days of imprisonment due to insulting the President through a Twitter post.

17: İstanbul SoL news portal’s Managing Editor Uğur Güç was acquitted in the lawsuit he was on trial at the Anatolian 29th Criminal Court of First Instance due to a news he reported.

18: Diyarbakır The prosecution of 11 lawyers, who were Executive Board Members of the previous session at the Bar Association, continued at the 13th Assize Court due to the report prepared on the death of a civilian in Oğul village of Hakkari, as well as using the expression “Armenian Genocide” in a statement on April 24, 2017 and using the expression “Kurdistan” in another speech. The next hearing was scheduled for February 17, 2021.

19: Diyarbakır 4th Assize Court sentenced People’s Democratic Party (HDP) MP Eşref Mamedoğlu to 9 years, 7 months and 15 days of imprisonment in total due to “illegal organisation membership” and “making illegal organisation propaganda.”

19: Diyarbakır 9th Assize Court sentenced People’s Democratic Party (HDP) MP Edip Binbir to 7 years and six months of imprisonment due to “illegal organisation membership.”

19: İstanbul BirGün Daily’s former Managing Editor Uğur Koç, its website’s former Managing Editor Mustafa Kömüş and owner İbrahim Aydın were acquitted of all charges in the lawsuit filed against them at the 2nd Criminal Court of First Instance.

20: Adana Four people were sentenced to 2 years of imprisonment each and seven people were sentenced to three years of imprisonment each in the lawsuit filed due to the march organised to call for the rally organised by KESK, DISK, TMMOB and TTB in the province on October 10, 2015.

20: Ankara In the lawsuit filed against former People’s Democratic Party (HDP) Co-Chair Selahattin Demirtaş at the 25th Assize Court due to his statements on the Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office, Demirtaş faces an imprisonment sentence from 3 years up to 8 years due to “targeting a public officer taking part in the fight against terrorism” and “threat”. The next hearing was scheduled for February 5, 2021.

20: Diyarbakır 75 people, including lawyers, rights advocates, politicians, professional chamber members, union members and association members and executives were detained within an investigation against the Democratic Society Congress (DTK). Five people, including Turkish Medical Chamber (TTB) High Honorary Council member Şeyhmus Gökalp, were arrested due to “illegal organisation membership.”

23: İstanbul Journalist Melis Alphan testified at İstanbul Press Crimes Investigation Office within the investigation opened against her due to a social media post on the Newroz celebrations in Diyarbakır in 2015.

23: İstanbul A lawsuit was filed against 46 people, who were detained in the 700th week of the Saturday Mothers’ protest. The first hearing will be held on March 25, 2021 at Çağlayan 21st Criminal Court of First Instance.

23: İstanbul Former Education and Science Workers’ Union (Eğitim-Sen) Chairman Rahmetullah Oral was sentenced to 3 years and 4 months of imprisonment at the 27th Assize Court due to a social media post.

23: İstanbul Former Taraf Daily reporter Mehmet Baransu was sentenced to 3 years and four months of imprisonment by the 2nd Assize Court due to the news article, “The Decision to End Gülen Was Taken in 2004 at the State Security Council.” Murat Şevki was acquitted.

23: İstanbul The verdict of non-prosecution issued in the investigation on Republican People’s Party (CHP) Provincial Chair Canan Kaftancıoğlu taking a photo of Presidential Communications Director Fahrettin Altun’s house was reversed by the Anatolian 8th Criminal Judicature of Peace following the objection of Altun’s lawyer.

24: Diyarbakır An investigation was started against the Justice and Development Party (AKP) former MP Galip Ensarioğlu by the Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office due to participating in a condolence ceremony for a YPG militant. Ensarioğlu testified at the Prosecutor’s Office.

24: İstanbul The prosecution of writer Temel Demirer continued at İstanbul 33rd Criminal Court of First Instance. The next hearing was scheduled for March 30, 2021.

24: İstanbul The first hearing of the lawsuit filed against six convict relatives, who performed a sit-in protest in order to draw attention to the hunger strikes in prisons with the demand for the isolation of PKK leader Abdullah Öcalan to be revoked, started at İstanbul 34th Assize Court.

26: Diyarbakır 4th Assize Court sentenced People’s Democratic Party (HDP) MP Kemal Bülbül to 6 years and three months of imprisonment due to “illegal organisation membership” in the lawsuit filed against the Democratic Society Congress (DTK).

26: İstanbul 26 party executives and members, including journalists, were detained in the operations against the People’s Democratic Congress (HDK) within an investigation.

27: Aydın A 16-year-old was detained after he took a video insulting Atatürk in Efeler district and shared it on social media.

27: Balıkesir Five people were detained in simultaneous house raids in Ayvalık, Burhaniye and Edremit due to “making PKK/KCK propaganda on social media.”

27: İzmir 17 people, including People’s Democratic Party (HDP) and Ege TUHAYDER member/executives and 11 women, were detained in house raids organized late at night due to “illegal organisation membership” and “making illegal organisation propaganda.” The files prepared against them were restricted and a 24-hour lawyer ban was brought on those detained.

29: Aydın/ Kuşadası One person, who posted on social media about mafia leader Alaattin Çakıcı, was arrested with a house raid late at night due to “public incitement towards resentment and hostility.”

3. Other Applications

01: Ankara 21 summaries prepared against 15 party MPs and 3 independent MPs with demands for their Parliamentary immunities to be taken off were sent to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT).

04: Ankara Information and Communication Technologies Authority (BTK) sentenced social network providers Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, TikTok, Periscope and Instagram, which have more than a million daily user interaction from Turkey, to 10 million TL fine each due to not having complied with their obligation to assign representatives in Turkey.

04: Ankara Criminal Judicature of Peace brought an access ban against the news published on Cumhuriyet, Gerçek Gündem and BirGün websites regarding a Religious Affairs Foundation worker due to violation of personal rights.

04: Nevşehir Criminal Judicature of Peace issued a verdict of withdrawal from shelves about two books prepared by the Republican People’s Party (CHP) - “Fund Scheme in Severance Allowances” and “Benefice Family Company...”

06: İzmir Two KCK convicts’ rights to letter and application were prevented at Şakran Prison in Aliğa.

10: Ankara Five summaries prepared against five People’s Democratic Party (HDP) and Republican People’s Party (CHP) member MPs were sent to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) with the demand for their Parliamentary immunities to be taken off.

13: Konya 2nd Criminal Judicature of Peace brought an access ban against the news published in 2016 and 2019 on Demokrat News and tr724 websites regarding the criminal complaints made by the lawyers of former People’s Democratic Party (HDP)

Chairman Selahattin Demirtaş at the Supreme Council of Judges and Prosecutors (HSYK) due to “violation of personal rights.”

17: Ankara Access Providers Union brought an access ban against the news published in BirGün and Ekşi Sözlük websites regarding a high school student in Bursa being locked in the dormitory by the school manager, due to “violation of personal rights.”

17: Diyarbakır In the lawsuit on the killing of Kemal Kurkut by police officer Y.Ş., who shot him from the back, 7th Assize Court issued the acquittal of Y.Ş. and for a criminal complaint to be made at the Prosecutor’s Office for the identification of the possible perpetrator.

18: Ankara Summaries prepared against two People’s Democratic Party (HDP) MPs were sent to the Grand National Assembly of Turkey (GNAT) with a claim for their Parliamentary immunities to be revoked.

18: Yozgat Criminal Judicature of Peace brought an access ban against the news published in Sözcü Daily and Dokuz8 websites on the allegations of bribery concerning former Justice and Development Party (AKP) Mayor of Şefaati district in Yozgat, due to “violation of personal rights.”

23: Diyarbakır In the lawsuit on the killing of Helin Hasret Şen, who died as a result of the fire opened from the armoured vehicle belonging to the police on October 12, 2015, 1st Assize Court decided for a stay of execution due to the lack of permission of investigation on police officer A.E. The objection made against the verdict was denied by the 2nd Assize Court.

30: Ankara Ankara Chief Public Prosecutor’s Office started an investigation against Republican People’s Party (CHP) Mersin MP Ali Mahir Başarır due to his expressions on the army at a TV show he attended.

4. Comments and Suggestions

Human Rights Foundation of Turkey (TIHV) - Coşkun Üsterci

Bans have increased and varied in November, with a special increase in pressure against the press. Raids against the offices of press organisations, searches, detainments, access bans against Internet news as well as prosecutions and penalties against press members have continued.

We see that the charge of “insulting the President” is prominent in lawsuits and prosecutions. Sendika.org editor Ali Ergin Demirhan and İleri Haber’s former Editor-In-Chief Onur Emre Yağan were sentenced to 1 year, 2 months and 17 days of imprisonment each. Onur Emre Yağan was sentenced based on four posts made from the social media accounts of the news website he was an editor for in 2014.

Of course, the charge of insulting the President is not limited to press members. Five people in Balıkesir, including Labour Party Balıkesir Provincial Chairman Cemil Tosunoğlu, were

sentenced to 1 year, 3 months and 16 days of imprisonment each due to organizing a commemoration event in Ayvalık district on the first anniversary of the October 10, Ankara Train Station Massacre based on the slogans chanted during the commemoration.

Another important issue that must be addressed in November is that two books prepared by the main opposition party, the Republican People's Party (CHP), named "Fund Scheme in Severance Allowances" and "Benefice Family Company" were withdrawn from shelves by Nevşehir Criminal Judicature of Peace.

As we always say, freedom of expression is a freedom that has fundamental democratic value. For freedom of expression, together with the complementary freedoms of organisation and meeting, provides citizens to actively participate in public field. Only through these freedoms, the citizens could criticise decision-makers, object to them and monitor them. This is why, freedoms of expression, meeting and organisation constitute the basis of a democratic social order. In a country where such freedoms aren't actively protected and used, it isn't possible to talk about democracy.

Today, let alone an ordinary citizen, even the main opposition, whose main job is to criticise and monitor the ruling power, is unable to use such freedoms. This is a terrible situation. Books criticising the activities of the ruling power are being withdrawn from shelves with court decrees. I leave it to those who read this report, whether democracy could be talked about in this country, when all such applications are considered.

In previous sessions, I have indicated that I was going to draw attention to the continuous protest and demonstration ban issued by Van Governorate. The Governorate has extended the unlawful bans for 15 days on November 20, 2020. Thus, the protest and demonstration ban initially declared in Van on November 21, 2016, was extended continuously for 1474 days. In other words, around 1 million 300 thousand citizens residing in Van are unable to use their most basic democratic rights and freedoms for 4 years, without break.

I would like to exhibit how this application reveals itself, with an example. The police prevented members of the Solidarity With Refugees Network from leaving carnations at the Van Lake on November 15, 2020 in order to draw attention to refugee deaths, based on the Governorate ban. In previous months, tens of refugees have drowned in the lake as a result of human traffickers attempting to take them across the lake. As is seen, citizens in Van are even unable to draw attention to such a humanitarian drama.

Another prominent incident of November was the banning and prevention of protests and demonstrations organized within November 25, International Day for the Elimination of Violence Against Women. The police intervened against these protests physically and detained many. Women all around Turkey, especially in Diyarbakır, Adana, Ankara, Istanbul and Van, were exposed to such applications. In other words, women wanting to protest violence against themselves faced violence from the police.

Lastly, I would like to mention a worrying development: A ban that was applied in Istanbul in October recurred in Urfa in November. Urfa Governorate banned the staging of Kurdish theater play "Bêrû" (Shameless), which was organised on November 14, 2020 to be staged at the Bar Association's conference hall, indefinitely. Not only it is worrying that artistic events, especially events in Kurdish as well as the use of the language are banned continuously, but it

is also an important development that shows the dimensions of the damage against freedoms, as well as the restrictions experienced by civil society.

Ankara

It could be seen that some types of violations are prominent in freedom of expression, meeting and demonstration. In this period, we see that applications of access bans and prosecutions have increased. It is important for such processes to be conducted transparently and for the right to fair trial to be complied with, in order to prevent violations. Human rights organisations and advocates must develop different reporting, documentation and defense tools according to each type of violation.

Izmir

A great earthquake happened in Izmir. NGOs, fan groups and certain political parties were prevented from opening booths after the earthquake for solidarity, even though they didn't use flags or logos. Some people were detained, whereas some associations with religious tendencies weren't prevented and were included within the Disaster and Emergency Management Presidency (AFAD). This, with the lightest evaluation, is double standards.

Interior Minister Süleyman Soylu's expressions for women fighting for their rights have humiliated and neglected their fight. Soylu had stated, "It would be naivety to think those who think that they are resolving all women's issues with two banners they hold, chanting a few words whispered to them from the West, from Europe, and those obsessed with politics and ideology only, have the slightest contribution to the matter in Turkey." Soylu also stated that there is an expression that says, "that who shouts and screams does so in order to cover his/her crime," thus declared women as criminals and prevented their freedom of expression.